2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

sasyltumsa, meaning fox's nose. On the left side of the coat is attached the strike-a-light (*xatat*) (see Fig. 36) with a leather bag for tinder (*kyalyk*); the cover of the pocket is decorated with a silver ornament. Also attached to the coat are the *iskax*, small pincers with which women pull out their pubic hair, and *sabaska*, a little wooden calendar. In addition to the silver pendants and bead decorations the coat is embroidered in silk. All the pendants on the left side of the coat are called *ottuk simaha*.

Fig. 36 (70-8633). Steel for making Fire.

The back of a rich woman's *sanayax*, black cloth decorated with silver embroidery, is illustrated in Fig. 37. The collar and skirt are covered with the valuable sea otter fur. The border of the skirt and its slit are trimmed with lynx. The silver embroidery, is, I believe, not original with the Yakut but is an adaptation from Russian art.

Some additional women's *sanayaxes* in the Museum collection merit description. A decorated coat of a foalskin with the hair on has a skirt trimmed with lynx. Above the trimming is a checker work strip made of alternate black and white squares, the white of horse legs and the black of horse and cowskins. On the back is appliquéd a figure made of lynx and *tarbagan* (a kind of marmot—*arctomys* spec.) skins. This, called *kybytya*, means a wedge, but the figure is in the form of outstretched wings (Fig. 38) and, according to the Yakut, symbolizes the shoulder blades and has a magical significance.

Fig. 37 (70-9068). Back of a Highly Ornamented Coat, the Type worn by Rich Women. The decorative motives are embroidered in silver thread.

The preference for *tarbagan* as coat material, says Sieroszevski,[1] originated evidently in their former abode in southern Siberia. In their present territory *tarbagan* is lacking. But Baron Toll[2] saw this animal to the north of the Verkhoyansk Mountain Ridge as did the writer in various parts of Yakutsk Province.

[1] Sieroszevski, *ibid.*, 335.
[2] Toll, E., *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Russische Reiches*, 100.

6; Sauer--116 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 372

"They attribute a particular being to the fire, and constantly offer sacrifices, supposing him equally possessed of the powers of good and evil."

6: Sauer--125 [2] G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 264, 372

"They never wash any of their eating or drinking utensils; but, as soon as a dish is emptied, they clean it with the fore and middle finger; for they think it a great sin to wash away any part of their food, and apprehend that the consequence will be a scarcity. Their earthen vessels they keep extremely clean, because they can make them so by burning, in which case the fire accepts the remains that adhered to the sides. Before they begin to eat any thing, they throw a small spoonful into the fire as an offering of thanks."

7: Shklovsky --53 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116, 372, 626

"With the Yakuts the hearth-fire is never extinguished, the glowing embers being easily kindled to flame by the addition of fresh wood. It is considered a great disgrace to a woman should she allow her fire to go out, and she would be teased to death, the shame also falling on her husband. I remember only one example of this occurring, and in consequence the husband and wife were obliged to go to the farthest clan, not being able to endure the taunts of their neighbours."

16: Great Britain Admiralty -- 166-167 G-3 (no date) 1920 Yakut
116, 237, 372, 415

"*Their winter dwellings are yurtas made of logs: the doors are made of raw hides,* the walls of logs or wicker, caulked with cow-dung and flanked with banks of earth to the height of the windows. In place of glass they have in the windows either skins or sheets of ice which are kept in place by slanting poles, and frozen afresh into their positions at intervals by pouring water round the edges. The roofs are flat and covered with earth. The door faces east, and is protected by projecting boards. Inside the yurta is divided into two 'apartments': one is for the cattle, the other divided into sections for the family. In the middle is a round chimney made of wood, but guarded against risk of fire by a thick covering of clay. In this chimney are placed cross-beams, from which they hang their kettles and pots. Their chief cooking utensil is a large iron pot; this was so [167] valuable when the Russians invaded their teritory that the price demanded for it was as many sable-skins as would fill it. In the summer they live in conical tents of birch-bark; the poles of which these are made are about 20 ft. long, united at the top; these are covered with pieces of flexible birch- bark, 'handsomely worked along the edge with horsehair thread.'"

17: Erman--269 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-2
116, 342, 171, 354, 372

"The Yakuts in Namana, and along the road onward for 110 versts, as far as Sanayakhtatsk, live still quite in their ancient, original fashion. Again, I found their yurts exactly like those of the Ostyaks; they are rectangular, flat-roofed, and fitted inside with what are here called narui, that is, raised and divided berths along the walls. The thick flakes of ice, which serve as window panes, were here also held against the wall from the outside, by a slanting pole, the lower end of which was fixed in the ground. In the night, when the fire goes out, this ice is covered, like glass, with an opaque and snow-like hoar-frost, which, in the daytime melts away, as well as a considerable portion of the ice itself, from the heat of the yurt, and the flakes, which are, at first, a foot thick, require to be renewed four or five times in the course of the winter; a provision of suitable ice always lying before the yurt. The parts of these dwellings which are directly heated by the fire, attain a temperature of +15° or +20° R. (1) We found the

1. It may be assumed that, of the heat proceeding from the fire-place, there is as much expended on the flake of ice as passes, on an average, through an equal area of the wooden wall. In a cubical yurt of 15 feet, the melting, in succession, of four flakes of ice a foot thick, shows that the whole amount of heat in 170 winter's days, would suffice to melt 5400 cubic feet of ice. The quantity of fuel required for this would amount, according to Rumford's experiments, if applied most advantageously,

to 231 cubic feet of wood in the course of the winter, or about 87 pounds a day. The daily supply which alone keeps the fire-place in the Yakutian yurts seems not to exceed this.

children in them, of both sexes, quite naked; they were, nevertheless, running about in this state to-day, when the thermometer was as low as —10° R., and even in the open air."

17: Erman--309-310 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 262, 291, 372

"The yurts of Lebegine and Menjega belong also to cow-keeping Yakuts. These people repeated to us the assurance that they prefer horse-flesh to all other meat, and that from their horned cattle they take for food, only milk and butter. Many here, too, wore pelisses of horse-skin, with the hair turned outwards; the rest, the usual sana-yakh or riding coat, which was made of reindeer leather, dyed of a reddish colour, and trimmed with a blue border at the corners. I observed in these yurts, for the first time, an excellent substitute for our tinder; it is made of the stalks of a kind of grass which grows in dry places. These are dried and beaten in the mortars which the Yakuts employ in preparing the bark meal. By this means the spiral vessels of the grass are separated from the rest, in tough, woolly [310] threads, about a fifth of a line thick. They are then rubbed well with wood-ashes from the hearth, and are thus rendered extremely inflammable. For a long time I used no other than this Yakutian tinder, and if it got damp I renewed it, and made it as susceptible as ever by only rubbing it with larch-ashes. It burned slowly, with an agreeable smell, and was capable of kindling even moist tobacco."

On the way home from the burial bunches of wood were kindled on the way; and the defunct's relatives jump across the flames in order to make themselves clean and free from the evil spirit who might have penetrated their clothes during the period of inevitable intercourse with their sick companion. Fire or the demon of fire, An-darchan-toen, or Al-ɔt-iccitja is the protector of the homes and of all persons living under one roof. Fire makes everything clean, it affords warmth, it helps prepare food. The god of fire dwells over the stove, and has the appearance of an old dwarf with a white beard. When preparing a meal it is advisable to throw the first bit of it into the stove. The evil spirit is afraid of the fire; therefore, when the dead man's relatives jump across the fire they leave the evil spirit behind. When they are back, they commemorate the defunct, or rather they treat each other in his honor with meat, salomata, tea, and liquor. In former times they also used to carve a commemorative wooden figure, two or three sixteenths of a yard high, and to decorate them with hides and glass pearls. While this representation was to recall the dead man, it is also supposed to be the spirit who protects the soul of the defunct and the latter himself in the other world. This puppet, however, was not kept in the yurta, but in the choton (Yakut word for cattle pen) or even in a hollow tree, where it was supplied with some bits of good food, and its mouth was smeared with cow's butter or trainoil, to feed him and to secure his protective spirit's aid. But time which destroys everything removed also this puppet to substitute a new one for another

defunct; and the old one had to be content with the second rank. Life asserted itself. Every day would bring new impressions, sad and agreeable, older events were forgotten, and memories of that kind have disappeared without a trace in the dark of the past, along with the memory of men.

27: Coxwell--285 B-3 (no date) 1925 Yakut
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"The Yakuts worship fire as a stupendous force; and whenever any sacrifice is offered, they sacrifice in the first place to fire: they give a spoonful of all food to the fire. Thus they throw into it a portion of the first spring kumyss; they worship Al-Iot everywhere."

53: Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

was a ceremonial libation of kumys in honor of the deities, prayers to them, the ceremonial drinking of the kumys from very large wooden goblets (choroon). After this there was feasting, games of various kinds, wrestling and so on. The attendants of the benevolent deities, the so-called ayyy-oyuuna ("white shamans"), were the masters of ceremonies at the festivities, although they died out among the Yakuts a long time ago, on account of the decline of this cult. By the end of the 19th century, there remained only legends of the white shamans.

In the cult of both the benevolent and malevolent deities, a part was played at one stage by the military aristocracy—the toyons; they were usually the organizers. In their legendary genealogies the toyons often derived their names from the great and powerful deities.

The ancient ysyakh retained elements of the clan cult, and according to legend they had been organized according to clan in former times. The Yakuts retained other survivals of the clan cult, but these were not very clearly marked. For example, they retained elements of totemism, pointed out in the literature of the 18th century (Stralenberg). Each clan had at one time its own patron in the form of an animal; the clan totems were, for example, ravens, swans, falcons, eagles, squirrels, and so on. The members of a particular clan not only refrained from slaughtering their patrons and eating them as food, but also avoided mentioning them by name.

Associated with the clan cult was the worship of fire, which is still retained by the Yakuts. Fire, according to Yakut superstition, is the purest element and it was forbidden to defile or dishonor it. Before each meal was started, pieces of food were thrown into the fire; it was splashed with milk, kumys and so on. All this was considered a sacrifice to the master of the fire (Uot-ichchite). There was often not only a single master, but as many as seven brothers. No images were made of them. The cult of ancestors among the Yakuts was poorly developed. Among the deceased it was only the shamans and certain outstanding people whose memory was honored, and whose spirits, for some reason, were feared.

Folklore

The folklore of the Yakuts was somewhat one-sided, but in certain regions it reached a high artistic level. Apart from the wealth of varied and deeply poetic oral folklore, singing was far less developed and instrumental music hardly existed at all; dancing was fairly poorly developed and monotonous. In the realm of graphic art, the Yakuts only developed the applied forms—finishing and ornamentation of articles in everyday use.

A whole series of different genres and forms stand out among the oral creation of the Yakuts. One of the most interesting is the epic poem—the olonkho.

This is a very ancient type of folk poetry and originated in the clan-tribal age. The language of the olonkho is archaic, and contains a large number of obsolete, almost incomprehensible words and expressions, though it is at the same time rich, colorful and imaginative; the vocabulary of the epic contains almost twice as many words as the everyday language. Consequently, these works are difficult to translate into other languages. The olonkho describes the exploits of mythical warriors (bootur) and their struggles against the evil spirits, the abaasy. There are whole cycles of these poems built round the images

55:Popov E-5 (no date) 1964 RV2 Yakut RV2
Dolgan

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Men's snow goggles.

There were certain traces of matriarchy still to be found. For example, in the old times several Dolgan families living in one dwelling would elect a communal housewife, to whom all the men were subordinate. Until quite recently, maternal kinship was considered closer than paternal kinship among the Dolgans. The women kept the fire going and "fed it," and also supervised the family sacred relics. Clan organization among the Dolgans fell into abeyance in the 19th century.

The development of trade and the introduction of improved techniques into the principal occupation of the Dolgans, that is to say hunting, led to the acquisition of furs on a personal level. Furs had long been an item of trade. Their commercial importance had an effect on the relations among the Dolgans in the field of distribution. Products from reindeer-hunting or fishing had to be divided among relatives and neighbors, while furs (polar-fox or sable) were considered the absolute property of the hunter and were left untouched. An important factor in the social differentiation of the Dolgans was the concentration of the bulk of the reindeer herds, which were not particularly numerous as a whole, in the hands of a small group of rich households. This became a basis for different forms of exploitation: such as the loaning of reindeer to poor people who then became dependent on the richer reindeer-breeders, the hiring of herdsmen, mainly orphans or poor relatives, and so on. Nomadic groups were often formed through the congregation of poorer households around a richer reindeer-breeder, who made use of his neighbors' labor for pasturing and watching the herd. In the second half of the 19th century petty Russian commercial travelers appeared among the Dolgans, together with Yakut merchants who exploited their kinsmen.

Nevertheless, the economic production and distribution among the Dolgans retained numerous traces of the original communal relationships. This includes the above-mentioned collective forms of hunting (cuttings, spearings), joint fowling, fishing and so forth. Although the means of production for hunting and fishing had long since become private property, the booty

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6
Yakut RY2

ing hour together, comparing the Yakut and Ainu people. He told me that he could not discern any similarity between the two races, either in physique, general customs or language. However, he mentioned a thing or two about the Yakuts' superstitions regarding fire, which were of great interest to me.

While the Ainu people look upon fire as it exists upon the hearth as of the feminine gender, the Yakuts hold it to be masculine. The divine spirit, which is the essence of fire, is supposed by them to be a grey-haired and most fussy old man. He is never entirely at rest and is a very garrulous old fellow. The cracking, snapping, jumping and hissing of fire are his remarks and whisperings. What his whisperings and shuffling about mean, ordinary people do not understand, yet the shamans and infants who have not yet learnt to speak understand it quite well, just as they are said to understand what the birds say to one another in their singing and chirping.

Like the Ainu "Old Woman Fire," the Yakut "Old Man Fire" knows what people are saying and doing about him in the houses, so all must be careful not to hurt his feelings, for that would be very dangerous. Rubbish may not be cast into the fire, and one must take care that no leaves or dirt be scraped off one's footgear near it. Nor must the fire be poked with any iron instrument. Moreover, the wooden fire-tongs must be burned up every ten days or so, and new ones provided. Unless these taboos are strictly adhered to, headaches and general misfortune will ensue.

A good housewife always takes care that the "Old Man Fire" may be satisfied with her, and she casts into it a small portion of everything which is being prepared for eating. The Hokkaidō Ainu custom is not so. It is the men alone who worship fire among these, and make offerings to it. I have never yet seen an Ainu woman on this island worshipping the fire or making offerings to it. The Yakuts say that as no one

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6
Yakut BV2

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ever knows what kind of temper the "Old Man Fire" may be in, as he sits there burning upon the hearth, it behoves everyone to conciliate him often by offering him little gifts, for he is a very jealous one. He is said to love fat, butter and cream better than anything else.

As regards firelight, there are two interesting taboos connected therewith. No young man may pass beyond the strip of light which falls from the household fire, to cross over to the women's side of the hearth; nor may any woman, if she can possibly avoid it, pass through the strip of light in front of the hearth. Any transgression of these two taboos would bring dire trouble, the Yakuts believe.